

OPERATION: THANK YOU NEWSLETTER
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In January I sent out something that was a very rough newsletter on email. It has started as just a note to explain and bring everyone up-to-date on what had been happening with OTY. It got out of hand (I can be a little long winded). It was rough because I was just writing, not organizing. Then it hit me there were volunteers that had no email so off went a copy that the email ramblings. In spite of how rough it was I had such good response to it and everyone enjoyed the letters from the troops so much (after all they are to everybody) that there will be a newsletter every 4 to 6 weeks. As the letters come in I will email them along but will include them as part of the hard copy newsletter. Also, I have added the names of those who believed in what we are doing and wanted to be a part of it to send cash donations. This will be a good way for them to see how we are spending their cash donations. We appreciate the financial support and want you to understand how we spend it. We can not exist without the financial support! There are many ways to be part of the OTY team and that is a very important way. EACH person who donates to OTY is a critical part of our team, whether they donate items that go into the boxes, time to help pack the boxes, being part of the Writing Team that send notes of encouragement, those who write the Christmas messages or take the cards to your churches and clubs, or those who give the financial support. EACH person is important and we can not do without one single person. YOUR involvement, in whatever way, is greatly appreciated!!!

In spite of the weather Operation: Thank You had been going strong. Being trapped by the snow and ice for 4 days allowed me to catch up on paperwork and get boxes packed. Also, Joan Blade passed her days of being trapped by making candy to ship to the troops. We have shipped 75 packages since the first of the year. Did you get that? 75 packages!! Last year OTY shipped 78 and in 2 months we have almost equaled that! For the most part all the donations from Christmas are shipped. Right now we are working with 45 different Points of Contacts (POC). Some we have gotten letters or emails from, others we will never know if they received what we shipped them. We do believe they receive them and just don't have time to contact us. They do have other things on their minds. We know they appreciate the packages. They like to know we are backing home thinking of them. Lately I have had some comments that they should be writing to us. Please do not get upset, things have intensified for them. There is a push to clean out trouble areas. They do not work an 8 hour day. Sometimes their days are 12, 14 or even 16 hour long. Sometimes they don't have time to eat, let alone write a letter of appreciation. When the letter and contacts are few that is when we should be praying harder for them, not getting upset with them.

We have several that will be coming home in March. They have all been told to leave behind for their replace how to contact us. Some will contact us, some won't but we are receiving new names weekly. In March I will be going into some meetings such as Eastern Stars, Chambers of Commerce, Business Woman's Association and Lion's Clubs to tell them about what we do and I will bring back new addresses from these visits as well as additional volunteers.

Do you belong to a group or club or organization or maybe your church that might be interested in learning about OTY? Ask the program chairman if they would like to learn about OTY. I will be interested in visiting and telling them about what we do and just how rewarding it is. I do not charge to do this nor do I beg for money. I tell about what we do by telling the stories that relate to what we have sent them. Okay, my mama didn't raise no fool! If they want to financially support us I WILL not turn it down. It is not cheap to run OTY. The boxes cost the minimum of \$8.10 each to mail, some as much as \$25 each. This does not count the contents. Did I tell you that the Christmas cards cost \$1,000 to mail and the Valentine's cost \$150? No, I will not turn it down! We need continued donations all year long. Many that know of OTY believe we are only a once a year Christmas card drive. They do not understand that is only a small part of what we do all year.

We do need to raise money to continue to operate at the level we have been. We have several churches that

are going to join us by having donation projects in the spring (yes, spring will come). We are putting donation jars in local stores. Applebee's in Milford is planning to have a Dine to Donate night for us. The Family Dollar Store in Morrow has gotten permission from the management to become a drop-off location several months during the year. We will supply them with a list of items that can be purchased right there and left right there. These things are all well and good but we will need other ways to raise larger funds. Put your thinking caps on, please. Plan something, take charge and I will come in and help.

OTY is coming up in the world. We are finally hitting the web! Ben McCray wanted to learn how to build a website so he volunteered to do it for us. We are working on it but if you would like to see what we are doing check out www.ohiooperationthankyou.org. Let us know what you think. We will be adding new pictures as they come in from our Heroes.

I have received some very positive feedback on the suggestion of having a Spring Dutch Treat Luncheon to get everyone together and get to know one another. I would love to hear what YOU think. IF we do it, it would be out in the Kings Island area.

The attached picture is of Rachael and Michael Rosebrock. I know several of you are writing to her. Thought you'd like to put a face with a name. They are the honeymooners getting the free honeymoon in Kuwait paid for by Uncle Sam.

God whispers in your soul and speaks to your mind. Sometimes when you don't have time to listen, He has to throw a brick at you.
It's your choice: Listen to the whisper, or wait for the brick.